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885
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to be reborn as man. All women were eager to undergo the post-partum fire at least once. After that modifications might be entertained.[57] Whether the baby lived or died was not pertinent, for the benefits of the fire were for the mother.

Comparison of Male and Female Maturation Rites

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The parallel ritual that fitted men to perform their masculine role was ordination into the Buddhist priesthood. The well-documented Buddhist ends should not be permitted to eclipse this other personal goal. Just as the fire prepared a woman for motherhood, so ordination changed an immature youth into a man ready for marriage and fatherhood. He too was transformed from raw (dip) to ripe (suk). Men gained compassion through denial and suffering. Since their natures were seen as hard (khaeng), strong, bent on gain, influence, and power, possibly destructive and concupiscent, the severest deprivations were invoked: the renouncement of the gratifications of sex and food. Of the 2, the deprivation of food involved the greatest break with previous habits, for since babyhood, food had been a symbol of maternal care. Hence, a man was cast on his own. His only refuge and support was the Buddha, the law, and the Brotherhood. This self-denial induced the suffering that, coupled with knowledge gained from study of the scriptures, led to compassion. The suffering in no way

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57. The fire-rest though desirable was not obligatory. In 1965, Bradley said it could be "dispensed with in times of civil commotion, for fear of the enemy" and "no damages whatever were suffered whatever to mother or child" (p.79). Like other life cycle rites it was postponed if not convenient (mâidaay). Also in times of peace, "a few mothers here and there cannot lie by the fire," and a few say, "they will not" (ibid:p.79). Bang Chan would accept this viewpoint freely as reflecting an individual, constitutional set of elements, or as an autonomous decision of an individual. The woman would never feel herself as competent as a ritually mature person though.

885 deprived a man of his masculine strength but was expected to
793 change him into a kind and merciful being.[58] It took at least
562 a three month season (phansā) in the priesthood to make a man
mature, responsible, and effective. That this moral fitness
785 was not obtained overnight was given vivid illustration: if a
[718] Buddha Amulet, designed for invulnerability, failed to be effective when tested by having a gun fired at it, it was "sometimes jokingly dismissed as a monk (phra) who has just been ordained (bwat mai)" (Textor:529). This interesting episode illuminates
789 one other important result achieved by both men and women in
885 their respective maturation rites: authorization to handle magic.

Magic and Maturity

In Bang Chan, magic was powerful. Whatever the purpose, whether beneficial or nefarious, it was effective if all conditions were met. Lest such power fall into unscrupulous hands, the community limited its availability and use to those who had gained the moral qualities and fitness to handle it wisely. Only the ritually mature could be counted on to be compassionate, strong, responsible adults, and so were permitted access to occult powers. Whether by ordination or the fire-rest, to be suk was an absolute prerequisite to magical knowledge. It did not give magical power, but qualified one to seek it out. Since no career in medicine was possible without magic, no man could be a mō who had not been previously ordained.

789 The uses of magic by men had entirely different objectives
562 from those of women. Their respective fields did not

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58. "A monk was changed...to be meek and mild." By seeking his morning alms he "show(s) mercy towards creatures" (prot sat) (Amuman Rajadhon:76-77). Women's tenderness in their maternal function was not associated with shyness. A compassionate woman with a strong winyan soul (which projected the quality of the heart) was enterprising and effective (cf. J.R. Hanks, 1959). Where sexual characteristics were confused, instability in behavior appeared. The cultural expectation was that children and women were delicate (ɔ̀n), older people and men were hard (khaang). "A male who is easily induced to convulse is one who had a 'soft' heart (ɔ̀i ɔ̀n).[t ...and also a 'soft' khwan (khwan ɔ̀n).....Such a young man is excitable rather than predictable and dependable, and hence is cause for parental anxiety" (Textor:408).

concerning its culture and use. Tilapia culture was learned largely by trial and error, and was considered primarily as a source of extra cash. If it had been regarded also as a means of improving health through increasing the family's food supply, and if the homemaker had been shown how to use this unfamiliar fish in familiar ways, the outcome might have been different. Increased use of fermented fish and of small dried fish which are eaten whole, should be encouraged. So long as the ability of human beings to adapt to such low calcium intakes without harm has not been proved, any feasible means of increasing the calcium content of the diet seems worth trying.

More home consumption of eggs would be desirable, but their ready sale and acceptability for barter may present an obstacle to increased home use. Increased production would probably lead to some increased home use at least at the peak season. Duck eggs which are less often sold, might be stressed both for this reason, and because of their greater size. The idea held by some that eggs are not good for children nor for pregnant women should be countered when possible. Since hard cooked eggs have many ceremonial uses, they might be presented as "strengthening" food. Hard cooked eggs, which could be prepared the night before, would be convenient as breakfast for workers who would otherwise go to the field without food, for lunch to be carried to the field or to school, and for occasions when parents are to be away from home, as at a ceremonial, and should leave food at home for children.

Milk, as canned, dried or malted milk preparations, was considered an appropriate gift for the priests, who are forbidden to eat solid food after the 11 a.m. meal. Some of this may be shared with the temple boys. The respected old ladies and others who stay overnight at the temple on the Buddhist holy day, and who observe the same rules as the priests for this time, also like to drink milk, often with coffee. Perhaps the wat committee could be taught how dried or canned milk should be reconstituted, and could direct that this be done. They could both spend some of the cash offerings for milk and encourage those who buy gifts of food for the priests to include milk among them. People gladly bought food for the priests and would probably accept on the authority of the head priest or respected elders, the idea of buying certain foods of high nutritive value, even though these cost more. If a small group of leaders, such as the wat committee or the hamlet headman were instructed in the dangers of contaminated water and the values of good food, with the implication that the best available should be offered the priests both daily, and on ceremonial occasions, improved practices might spread to home consumption, since most food is prepared in the home.

The importance of merit making and the relatively large cash expenditures involved in ceremonials, will probably influence acceptance of any improved practices which involve cash outlay. If some leaders were interested in dietary